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4 October 1973

CIA'S ALLEGED ROLE IN CHILEAN COUP

1. Despite the uninformed speculation rampant in the news media, CIA did not play any role in the 11 September 1973 military coup in Chile. Specifically, we did not stimulate or support any moves against the Allende government via our contacts in the military, the political opposition, and the private sector. Nor did we in any way support the strikes and work stoppages of the truckers and other organizations which eventually precipitated the coup. Charges that we were in some way involved in the death of Allende are also completely unfounded. While the circumstances of his death are not entirely clear, the weight of evidence to date indicates that he probably did commit suicide.
2. In the wake of Allende's inauguration in 1970, CIA's role in Chile was confined to providing funds and influencing, to the extent we could, opposition political parties and media. The basic purpose of this program was to keep the opposition to Allende alive and active by providing it with the means and encouragement to resist. The hope was that this political rear guard action would be effective enough to hold a reasonably fair presidential election in 1976 which would turn the government (Allende) candidate out.
3. In all, \$6.5 million was authorized by the 40 Committee for support to the opposition during the Allende regime. The lion's share of this support went to the political parties and media. Support to the private sector organizations was limited to several undertakings in the 4 March 1973 congressional elections. And, if one is to accept the testimonials of our contacts in the opposition political parties and media, plus our Station's observations, there is little question that this assistance was vital.
4. In short, while CIA did support the political opposition to Allende throughout this period, it was quite careful to avoid any actions or activities which could be construed as promoting or advocating a coup d'etat.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

13 SEP 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
The Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT: CIA's Covert Action Program
in Chile Since 1970

1. This Agency did not conduct covert action operations in support of either of the two democratic candidates who opposed Salvador Allende in the 1970 presidential election. Our role in the election was limited to an effort to denigrate Allende and his Popular Unity (UP) coalition during the campaign. Since Allende's inauguration, U.S. policy has been to maintain maximum covert pressure to prevent the Allende regime's consolidation. Under this policy the 40 Committee has approved since January 1971 financial support totaling \$6,476,166 for Chilean political parties, media, and private sector organizations opposed to the Allende regime. The attachment provides a summary of the amounts approved by the Committee and the purposes for which these funds were used.

2. Funds [REDACTED] channeled to opposition forces in Chile through our Santiago Station enabled the three opposition political parties -- Christian Democratic Party (PDC), National Party (PN) and Democratic Radical Party (PDR) -- to improve their internal organizations, [REDACTED] and to compete successfully in a number of congressional by-elections.

These congressional elections were considered by both the UP and the opposition as a form of plebiscite to determine whether or not the government had a popular mandate to continue the implementation of its revolutionary program.

~~SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

Limited support was also made available to private sector organizations, but because some of these groups began to try to provoke a military coup, our funding was confined to specific activities in support of the opposition coalition in the March congressional elections.

3. After the March 1973 elections, it became increasingly apparent that three years of political polarization had strained the fabric of Chilean society to the breaking point. Various U.S. policy options were considered, and on 20 August 1973 the 40 Committee approved an additional \$1,000,000 to support opposition political parties and private sector organizations through June 1974; support to the private sector, however, was made contingent on the concurrence of Ambassador Davis and the Department of State. Since this concurrence was not given, no support was provided to the private sector, whose initiative in launching and maintaining a series of crippling strikes was instrumental in provoking the military coup of 11 September 1973. Thus, while the Agency was instrumental in enabling opposition political parties and media to survive and to maintain their dynamic resistance to the Allende regime, the CIA played no direct role in the events which led to the establishment of the new military government.

W. E. Colby
Director

Attachment:
Summary of 40 Committee Approvals

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